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The Considerations of Chloe the Camel
A Story for Christmas 2020

Chapter 1

Sometimes, being the youngest and smallest camel in the herd stinks! I want to run and run and run all the time! The grownup camels tell me that camels aren't made for running; we are made for hard work and long journeys. Sometimes we carry things and sometimes we carry people. And we seldom run. If there was a fire in the stable, we might run. Otherwise, we lope along at a steady pace. Sure, we can drink like 50 gallons of water in about three minutes, and we can go for days and days without drinking again. This doesn't make up for having to lope instead of run, though.

Hi, my name is Chloe and I want to make a case for why camels should run more. First, we can be really fast, like 40 miles per hour for shorter distances and about 25 miles an hour for longer ones. And, you know, it's fun to run and run and run. The best part is that when you run you get to places quicker than if you don't. And when you get to places more quickly, you don't miss important stuff.

You see, there's a group of people getting ready to go on a long journey. They want to follow a giant star that appeared in the sky just a few nights ago. They say that there is an important king that is going to be born under that star. I'm going to get to go with them because my parents help transport the important people. They can carry hundreds of pounds of stuff and, of course, the people themselves. I can't carry that much, yet. I will someday, I'm sure. For now, I will probably travel with the workers, who will make sure there is food on the journey and help with the laundry and setting up camp while the group travels. It'll be an adventure and that part will be fun. My parents have told me that there will be no running on the journey - absolutely none. I don't think this is fair. If it's such a long way and there's going to be a baby born, shouldn't we run to get there and not miss it?

You know grown-ups, though, don't you? Once they make up their minds, the rest of us kind of have to go along. And, I suppose, it's better to plod along than not to be able to go at all. I'm just worried that we won't get there soon enough.

Chapter 2

It's been a few days since I've had time to talk with you because we had to get packed and start the journey. This is such a strange thing we are doing. Do you know what I have in my pack? I have boxes of gold, frankincense, and myrrh! Who brings this stuff on a long journey and who

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thinks these are good gifts for a baby? Why not useful things like blankets, teddy bears, and warm clothes? Gold, frankincense, and myrrh of all things. People are weird!

My parents tell me that I'm lucky to be carrying such important items because that means I get to travel with the magi, the wise ones, who are following the star instead of being back with the workers. You know, I think the workers are more fun. They tell stories and laugh and sing while we plod along. These magi are serious people. I can't imagine them ever running just because it's fun. They are all about the star and what they will find. What kind of king is going to be born? How will a baby change the world? There are old stories told about this one, *prophecies* I think these stories are called. The magi are worried that something will happen to the baby before they get there. The king in that land won't be happy when this new king is born. He'll be afraid of losing his throne and might wish the baby harm. I try to tell my parents that this is all the more reason we should be running and not just plodding along at a boring, slow pace. They tell me to be quiet and that camels are patient. I'm a camel, dromedary camel (you know, the kind with one hump), and I'm not patient at all. We should be running, I tell you, running.

Chapter 3

It's me, Chloe, again. I don't know how many days it's been since I last talked with you. All the days are the same now. The days are hot and there's desert everywhere and nothing much to be seen. There's hills sometimes, but that's about it. Some days we keep traveling into the night so the magi can keep track of the star better. It's cold at night and I'd rather be sleeping. We have to keep going, though, because other travelers are reporting that the baby was already born! I'm not sure it's the right baby, though. This baby that the others are talking about was born in a stable. Even I know that baby humans aren't born in a stable. Baby camels, yes, of course. Not baby humans, though. So maybe there's been some mistake. And, you know, they still won't run. Nope. They won't run even though they might already be too late for the birth. Running would be more fun than this.

Chapter 4

Sorry it's been a while since we last talked. There was nothing new to share. Lots of desert and long days of plodding along without *any* running. It's different now, though. There's a city on the horizon. It's a big city and it's noisy, like there are way too many people and animals there already. The magi sent a runner (a human one) into the city today to request a meeting with the king. I wanted to go with that runner so badly! My parents told me that it was a job for someone with two feet, not four.

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Anyway, we're camped out here in view of the city waiting to hear if the king will meet with the magi to talk about the baby born under the star that still shines every night. The rumors have been confirmed that the baby was born a while ago, like when we first started our long trek. I'm telling you, if we had run here, we might have gotten here on time for the birth. I suppose it's okay if we missed the birth itself. We just don't want to miss the chance to see that baby and give him the weird presents I carried all this way.

Oh, the runner just came back. The king wants to meet with the magi right away. Maybe we'll run now. We shouldn't keep a king waiting, right?

There's no running even now. My parents tell me it isn't dignified to meet with a king all out of breath and sweaty. So we will plod through the city, leaving the workers at the camp so there won't be too many of us.

Well, the king isn't a nice guy, I don't think. He's a bit too curious about the baby in the manger. I don't think he has good intentions. We, however, are going to a place called Bethlehem to meet that baby who is supposed to be a new kind of king, the kind that will change the world. I don't know how that can be. Do you?

Chapter 5

Okay. Here we are at long last. Do you know that this baby and his parents are still in the stable? There's so many people in this city that there is no room for them in any inn. You'd think they'd make room somewhere for a new king, wouldn't you? They don't. And this stable is little more than a cave. It's not even as nice as the stable back home. We're all going to get to go inside, though. Even me. Let me tell you, it's hard not to run now! I mean, what kind of a baby is worth a super long journey guided only by a big old star?

Wow! I was wrong about this baby. He's no ordinary child, for sure. I watched as all the humans, even the magi, knelt before him. Then they took out the boxes from my pack and offered them to him. They said that they were gifts for a king and that they were honored to be in his presence. Then I got to get a close look at this baby, and I felt something change in me.

If you get a chance to go to Bethlehem, no matter how long or how hard or how boring the journey, you should go. When that baby looked into my eyes, I felt like he saw me and knew me in ways I don't even know myself. And I wanted to tell him all about my dream of being a camel who runs all the time, and I swear he smiled at me. Then I somehow didn't need to tell him anything. And I felt like everything was going to be okay even if I could only run sometimes.

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Humans talk about love all the time and I didn't really get it until that baby looked at me. His name is Jesus, by the way. And looking into his eye is like looking into the sun, but way nicer. I mean he's so full of light and love you can't help but feel it even when he's too young to talk. I don't know, I just feel so loved right now and I want to run around and share that love with everybody – two-legged and four-legged alike. Everyone should know this kind of love, really. It's that special. Seriously, if someone invites you to Bethlehem, go, and run if you can. It's totally worth it.

I have to go now. We have to go home by a different road because the grown-up king shouldn't know exactly where this baby king is. The grown-up king is so full of his own self that he won't understand the love in this baby. That's no way to be. Everyone should understand the love in this baby. It's the love that will change the world and make a world where camels don't run all the time a good world, even without the running, you know? If everyone would share this kind of love, we won't need a star to light up the night sky; we will do that ourselves.

Can you imagine how nice it would be if every creature shared this big, huge love? I mean it makes not being able to run everywhere acceptable, so it could probably make a whole lot of things better. We should try to love like this baby loves – camels and humans, too.

I have to go now. Maybe I'll see you in Bethlehem sometime. Or maybe on the journey. I could help carry your stuff, or you, if you don't mind running sometimes… In the meantime, remember that Jesus' birth in that stable is all about love, a love so big that one is left out. Bye, now. And Merry Christmas!

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